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User Experience in Fashion Brand Pages in Social Networking Sites: Values and Affective Experience of Information Interaction

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Keywords: User experience, information interaction, brand page, SNS, fashion

Introduction With the rapid growth in the popularity of Social Networking Sites (SNS), marketers are turning attention to SNS as a key communication platform for promoting brands to target users. Marketing opportunities in SNS vary from partnering with brand advocates/ambassadors to managing brand pages and interacting with users directly. A brand page (*a.k.a.*, fan page), a profile page created by a company in SNS, has become crucial for brand management due to its potential for cultivating positive outcomes (brand image and awareness, e-WOM) (e.g., Jansen, Zhang, Sobel, & Chowdury, 2009) thereby creating added values for brands and customers. Despite the anecdotal evidence suggesting the importance of successful brand page management, however, designing positive user experiences in SNS still remains challenging (He et al., 2015). Our aim is to enrich a current understanding about brand pages in SNS by focusing on user experiences during information interaction (e.g., searching and reading visual/verbal posts and comments) in brand pages. Research on information interactions in SNS is in its nascent stage; research has put greater emphasis on instrumental aspects of information processing (usability, utility) (Chow & Shi, 2015), with less attention to non-instrumental aspects (e.g., affective experiences) (Hassenzahl & Tractinsky, 2006). To fill this void, this study investigates how different values of information interaction in brand pages in SNS influence affective experiences, which in turn affect users' experiential states and thus their loyalty intention toward brand pages.

Theoretical Background and Hypotheses User experience (UX) concerns how users face interactions especially with technology. Hassenzahl and Tractinsky (2006) conceptualized that human needs go beyond instrumental aspects, embracing aesthetic/hedonic, emotions and affect, and experiential facets from interactions with a particular product, service, or system. Following the notion, van der Sluis (2013) developed a model of Information eXperience (IX) to explain user experiences with information interaction. According to the model, both instrumental and non-instrumental values stemming from information exchanges foster affective responses (affective experience), which thus influence responsive experiential states (being satisfied, engaging, and slow thinking). In the current study, two instrumental values of interest are perceived control and usefulness; two non-instrumental values include perceived enjoyment and connectedness; affective experience reflects affective response; and experiential states include three states specific to IX (satisfaction, engagement, cognitive elaboration) and behavioral intention (loyalty intention) toward brand pages. Applying the model to the context of user experience with brand pages in SNS, we develop the following hypotheses:

H1. Perceived values of information interaction (a: controllability, b: usefulness, c: enjoyment, d: connectedness) will positively influence affective experience.

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H2. Affective experience will positively influence experiential states (a: satisfaction, b: engagement, c: cognitive elaboration).

H3. Experiential states (a: satisfaction, b: engagement, c: cognitive elaboration) will positively influence loyalty intention toward brand pages.

Method and Results An online survey method was employed for data collection. The survey was administered to adult Koreans who followed at least fashion brand SNS pages. Measures of research variables were adapted from previous research. Participants were directed to recall the most recently visited fashion brand page in SNS to complete the questionnaire. A total of 290 responses were used for data analysis (mean age = 28; female = 69.0%). First, CFA with the ML estimation (AMOS 21) showed that the model fitted the data well ($\chi^2=623.707$, $df=391$, $p < .001$, CMIN/DF=1.595, SRMR=.045, CFI=.961, TLI=.953, RMSEA=.045). Composite reliabilities, convergent and discriminant validity were satisfactory. Next, the results of SEM revealed that the model fitted the data well ($\chi^2=806.182$, $df=411$, $p < .001$, CMIN/DF=1.962, SRMR=.064, CFI=.933, TLI=.924, RMSEA=.058). All hypotheses were supported except for H1d (perceived connectedness→affective experience) (Figure 1).

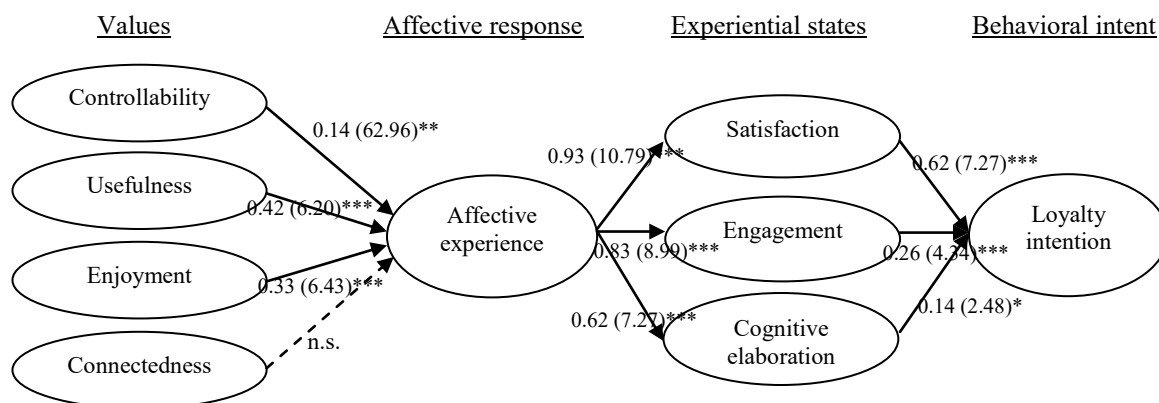


Figure 1. Resulted Model. Numbers are standardized regression weights and Critical Ratio (CRs) in parentheses. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. n.s.=not significant

Discussion Our findings support van der Sluis' (2013) model of Information eXperience (IX) in the context of fashion brand pages in SNS. That is, users' affective experience during information interaction plays a key role in generating positive user experiences with brand pages in SNS. Specifically, this study shows that affective experience that occur during information interaction in a brand page enhances users' satisfaction, engagement, and cognitive elaboration, thereby increasing customer loyalty intentions toward the brand page. In addition, this study identifies three facets of perceived values of IX (perceived controllability, usefulness, and enjoyment) that play significant roles in the creation of affective experience. These findings provide guidelines for fashion brand marketers to determine effective strategies for seamless user and information experiences in SNS.

References available upon request